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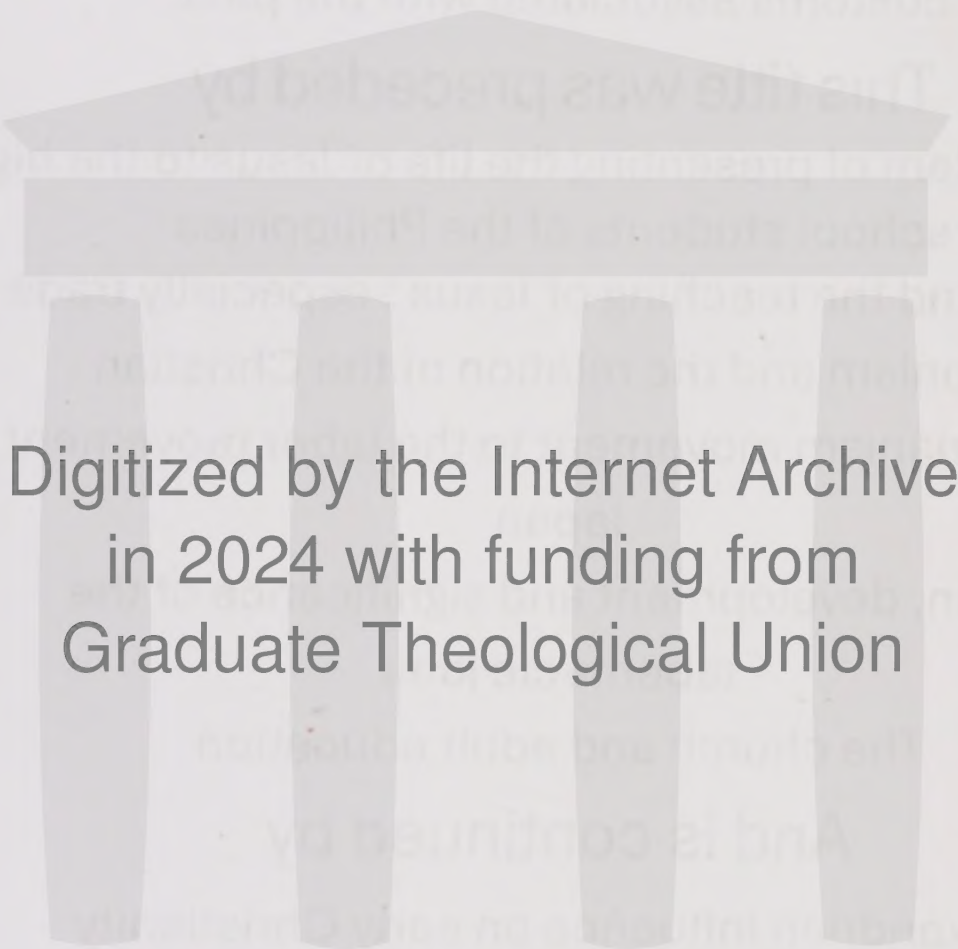
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THE EASTER FESTIVAL
ITS HISTORIC BACKGROUND AND
CUSTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PAST

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THE CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL OF EASTER

Introduction. Easter does not have its genesis in the Christian religion. Rather, it is like a tree which buds and blossoms in one world, but sends its roots deep into the soil of another, and thus is nourished from a realm not seen by those who admire the blossoms and gather the fruit. So Easter roots into the far past and brings into the present a richness and beauty collected along the way from many contributing factors.

The Christian religion has had the genius to accept what it found in the life of a people, then adopt and adapt those customs, ideas, and days for another and new use and meaning. Thus baptism was an established custom and rite of cleansing before the time of Christ. Yet with the establishment of the religion of Jesus baptism was given a new significance and beauty. It continued to be a ceremony of cleansing, but there was added the symbolism of burial with Jesus, and his resurrection from the dead. The Apostle Paul gives this picture to Christian followers (Romans 6: 4 - 5), "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection".

Thus the springtime festival of the Christian religion known as EASTER is an adaptation of a festival which was already well established among many people. The time being coincidental with the death and burial and resurrection of Jesus, his followers and believers adopted the spring festival, gave it new content and meaning, added to it the story of Jesus' victory over death and made it a day of joy and happiness.

I. THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND.

1. Origin of the name.

The name "Easter" seems to have come from a similar name in the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic languages. The name variously given as "Eostre", "Eostur", and "Ostara", is used for a Teutonic goddess of spring, associated with the idea of new life following the winter season. Other than the name little seems to be known, not even well established myths.

Bede mentions two Anglo-Saxon goddesses, "Hreda" and "Eostur", after whom the months of March and April were named. "We know nothing further of these deities. The word "Eostur" is connected with Latin Aurora, and Greek Hoos (Ἥως) which denote the personification of the dawn". 1.

There is an interesting tradition of the Norsemen spring festival which Leonard Stuart believes closely connected with the Easter festival. He says, "The term in Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon languages is derived from OSTARA, the divinity of spring of the Ancient Norsemen, who was welcomed in a festival of celebration on her annual return, reclothing the earth with greenery and flowers, after each winter and night of death had stripped the world of its faded robes and hidden them away, the Sun even in the northermost inhabited regions disappearing during the coldest winter months.

"In the Greek and Latin languages and in the languages derived from them, the spring festival is called Pascha, Pasch, Pasqua, Pascua, Paques, etc. from the Chaldee word Pascha, signifying passing. This is equivalent to the Hebrew word Pesach, the word recalling the "Passing-over" of the Hebrew households when death smote the Egyptians, as recorded in Exodus, Chapter 12:"2.

To the Norsemen the festival of the divinity of spring which they called Ostara or Eastre (whence Easter) was especially a season of new birth. "From this festival arose the symbols of the Easter Rabbit, and the Easter Egg, as prolific producers of species; the decoration of springs and wells with flowers in token of the returning flow of water

as a life-giving necessity; and the custom of baptismal cleanliness, purification, and regeneration".

"Every rite has a physical basis. The coloring of Easter Eggs red, blue, yellow, etc. was borrowed from the rays of the Aurora borealis, the northern lights, and the dawning hues of the Easter sun. At Easter the hearth fires were lighted afresh. Easter bon-fires were kindled on the hills, dispersing the germs of evil so far as the Easter fire shed its light. Around these purifying fires young men and maidens who desired marriage during the coming year sang and danced three (or nine) times, or gave three leaps over the flame". 1.

Thus it is evident that there was a festival of spring among the people of many lands, and while the celebrations of this festival were usually of a social nature and of social significance, not infrequently there was a religious element present which makes the connection with the Christian festival more potent. It is therefore timely that we consider the factors which contributed to the Christian celebration.

2. Customs and Observances which Contributed to Easter.

A. Ranking first in importance should be mentioned the Jewish Passover. As has been indicated above, this festival of the Hebrew people had close connection with their flight from Egypt, when the Hebrew families were spared from the death

1. Chas. L. Stuart, The Americana. Vol. 9. Page 507.

of the first born, while those of the Egyptian masters were taken, as related in Exodus 11 and 12. There was established at that time a festival called the "Passover", which recalled this great event in the life of the Hebrew people, and which is religiously observed among the orthodox Hebrews until today. The time of this festival is historically on the 14 day of Nisan, or the first spring month, which corresponds to April of the present calendar. Since the crucifixion of Jesus immediately preceded the Jewish Passover, it gave the Christians of that time, who were entirely of the Jewish race, a striking figure and this connection which became both real and ideal. "Real, since Christ died on the first Jewish Easter day; ideal, like the relation between type and reality, because Christ's death and Resurrection had its figures and types in the Old Law". 1.

The New Testament was written in the Greek language, and in referring to the Easter festival or season it accommodated itself to the Hebrew word for the passover, (Pesach), the Greek word being Paska (Πασκα) but having no connection with the Greek verb Paskein (Πασκειν) "To suffer". There has been confusion on this point in New Testament exegesis, no doubt being caused by Paul's figure of speech in I Corinthians 5: 7 thus: "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For Christ our passover hath

1. Fred G. Holweck, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. 5, P. 224.

been sacrificed for us", or as Moffatt translates the passage, "Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed".

The conclusion in this matter is that the words from various languages from which Easter is derived have no connection with the crucifixion and the suffering of Jesus, but rather they refer to the passing of the winter and the dawn of spring. Therefore, instead of carrying the meaning of suffering and agony - as an offering sacrificed, they convey the note of victory and joy. So that Easter is spoken of by many as the most joyful festival of Christendom, even surpassing Christmas as a festival of joy and happiness. This conclusion may seem somewhat biased on first thought, but we must remember that it has been largely the introduction of the "Santa Claus" element into the Christmas festival which is responsible for much of the decorations, tinsel, and noise of the time, and this has been accounted as expressions of joy. But as a matter of fact it is only a shrewd way of promoting business, for Christmas has degenerated into a time of spending money for gifts. However, to those who would see it, the original joy of the birth of the Christ Child and the meaning of his coming to the world are still present. These elements are found in the deeper expressions of the season, the singing of Christmas carols and the participation in worship which seeks to interpret the real significance of Jesus' coming into the world. In such assemblies Santa Claus is not mentioned, nor does that mythical figure have any place.

But the songs of Christmas and the joy expressed at the coming of Jesus as a messenger of God's grace would all fall short of fulfillment without the songs of victory of Easter, for this seeming tragedy of Calvary ended in a victory in the garden --- the Resurrection. So Easter is a time of joy and victory. Stuart says regarding it, "Besides being commemorative of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, the Easter festival of modern times is a memorial of the Christian passover from the Old Dispensation of the moral law to the New Dispensation, wrought by the sacrifice for unity or atonement in the innocent death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. At first the Christian passover was celebrated on the same day as the Hebrew, the 14th day of Nisan (April). But the church at Rome and the other churches of the Latin world soon transferred the observance to the Sunday next after the 14th of Nisan, primarily to mark the difference between Judaism and Christianity". 1.

"The week of seven days was taken over by the Christians from the Jewish church with the change of the sacred day --- the first, the day hallowed by Christ's resurrection, occupying the place of the seventh". 2.

1. Chas. Leonard Stuart. The Americana, Vol. 9, P. 508.

2. James G. Carlton, Dict. Rel. and Ethics, Vol. 5, P. 844.

In the Epistle of Barnabas (Ch. 15) are found the words, "We keep the eighth day for rejoicing, in which also Jesus rose from the dead". And in the Didache, the first Christian Manual early in the second century, the passage: "On the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks". In the book of Revelation (1:10) the writer calls the first day of the week the "Lord's Day". Thus, Sunday, or the first day of the week, came to be associated with the first Easter as an anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and as such a kind of memorial day for him. Hence Christians met for worship on that day.

There was a tendency among some Christians of the Jewish race to observe the Jewish Sabbath, or Saturday the seventh day, as the day of worship. But this was regarded by many as a mark of Judaizing, and it was gradually dropped.

Chas. Leonard Stuart thinks the various spring festivals were closely related, in their origin, to the Greek and Latin myths of Demeter and Persephone (Latin Ceres and Proserpine), when Persephone was abducted from the earth to the shades of the underworld. Her return for a short time was marked by joy and happiness, -- and the signs of the spring time. In connection with this spring festival the Greeks had their "Eleusis", a general term for a "place of coming or assembly", and not originally attached to any particular place

or locality. They celebrated the festival with the mysterious processions of veiled figures with torches, and moving from side to side in mimic search for the lost maiden, Persephone.

Stuart suggests that there is a striking similarity between this festival of ancient times and the modern spring festivals, especially the May-pole dances, and adds, "The modern May-pole dances have their origin in these Eleusinian spring celebrations, for the rhythmic interlacing circles of figures holding the brightly colored ribbons recall inevitably the measured torchlight dance of Eleusis, the search from side to side for the lost Persephone". 1.

The resemblance between the ancient customs and the modern survival of similar ideas, but expressed in a variety of ways, convinces one that there is a fundamental basis for the springtime joy, and the happy welcome of the signs of life, following the winter of death. There is significance, too, in the fact that while many of these customs are seemingly social in their nature, there is an under current of religious sentiment also. Stuart comments on this, "The semblance between the spring festivals throughout the history of the world disclosed the universal inclination to worship and reverence, to natural piety". 2.

1. Chas. Leonard Stuart, *The Americans*, Vol. 9, P. 507.

2. Ibb.

B. The Spring Festival among the Greeks and Romans.

In ancient Greece and Rome, as among the early Celts and Germans, the first approach of spring was heralded by festivals which had derived their origin from the cult of the dead; the belief in spirits, and the desire to secure protection against their ill-will. Their festivals were very similar in their fundamental ideas among all these people, and therefore very similar in their manner of celebration.

"In Greece and Rome these festivals assumed a special form as mysteries and developed into a special form of festival. In this form they were carried across the Alps by the Romans, and spread rapidly in this new territory. This transplanting was rendered all the easier by the fact that there already existed in this Transalpine area festivals of similar character, though developed in a different way". 1.

When Christianity penetrated these areas it found these spring festivals well established, and while unable to suppress or eradicate them, it was able to adopt and use much that they contained. But by this process of assimilation much of the former non-Christian element remained as a permanent part.

1. C. Rodenacher, *Encyclo. Rel. and Ethics*. Vol. III. Page 228.

3. The Date of Easter in History.

The Jewish Passover was observed toward the evening of the 14th day of Nisan. (The first month of Spring). This was on Friday, since the Passover was eaten before Saturday, the Sabbath, which was a day of rest.

To the Christians who were following the Jewish calendar the date of Easter was simple, for it was the Sunday following the 14th of Nisan, or the 15th day of Nisan.

But in the Roman Empire, there were other systems of Chronology. "Since 45 B. C. the Romans had used the reformed Julian calendar. There were also the Egyptian and the Syro-Macedonian calendars. These differed in that the Jewish calendar was the lunar year of 354 days, while the other systems depended on the solar year. The first days of the Jewish year did not correspond to those of the other calendars, and as a result the Jewish system had an intercalary month every year. This month was not inserted according to some rule, but arbitrarily and at the command of the Sanhedrin, therefore the Jewish date could never be determined with equal certainty with the Julian or Gregorian systems." 1.

This difference between the Jewish and other calendars explains the movable date of Easter, since Easter could not

1. Holweck, Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. V. Page 225.

have a fixed date so long as it was governed by the Jewish calendar which was continually shifting on the Julian calendar.

"As a result of this some Christians of the Orient commemorated the death of Jesus, the Paschal Lamb, on the 14th day of Nisan and his resurrection on the 17th day of Nisan, regardless of the day of the week on which they came -- according to other calendars.

"Because the Sunday following the 14th of Nisan was the historical date of the resurrection, this day was established by Rome as the Christian feast of Easter.

"Easter was celebrated in Rome on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring Equinox. Therefore the earliest date on which Easter may fall is March 22nd, and the latest April 25th". 1. This date was definitely fixed by the Catholic church during the Council of Nicaea, A. D. 325.

This movable date for Easter was the grounds for much discussion and inconvenience and difficulty. The controversy extended over a long period, and so important was the matter considered to be in the past that some declared that, "A priest who does not know the Computus Paschalis is unworthy to be a priest". 2.

1. Catholic Encyclo. Vol. V. P. 225 Holweck.

2. " " " " " " "

The churches of Asia and some in the west which had been founded by missionaries from the east were slow to adopt the usage of Rome. The diversity of the date for Easter gave rise to what is known in church history as the "Easter Controversy", the western churches objecting to what they termed "subservience of Judaism", and the eastern churches accusing the western churches of introducing innovations and departing from the ways of Jesus and his apostles. It was not until the year A. D. 325 at the council of Nicæa, mentioned above, that the law was enacted for all the churches. During this council we read, "To the bishop of Alexandria was committed in permanence the task of computing for all churches the time of Easter, that city being the metropolis of science in those days." 1.

But the calendar as arranged in Alexander proved to be confusing and unsatisfactory. For example, in 444 A. D. Rome observed Easter on March 26, while Alexandria observed the day April 23. Again in A. D. 387 Easter Day in France was on March 21; in Italy April 18; and in Egypt April 25.

The movable festivals of the Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican, and Protestant Episcopal churches are determined by the day of the month upon which Easter falls.

1. The Americana, Chas. Leonard Stuart, Vol. IX. P. 506.

4. The Easter Cycle.

There were various efforts to establish some system by which it was hoped to form a cycle over a period of years. "That in such a series Easter Sunday always falls in the same sequence on the same day of the month. Such a cycle exists for the Julian calendar and comprises 532 years. Besides this cycle there is another, consisting of 48 years, which is mentioned at the close of the third century, but which was later superseded by the cycle of 532 years because it was found the computation was wrong. A lunar cycle of nineteen years is also named and only in this sense can the Easter Cycle be connected with the Gregorian calendar." 1. These cycles were more fancy than fact, and have never proved of great value, and consequently have not enjoyed a wide use.

Because of the way in which the local churches were organized and developed in the communities they were frequently more or less remote from each other, and consequently there was not a close form relating one to the other. Each church was rather autonomous in its practices, its worship, and its constitution. When there was an effort to regulate these practices and unify the life of the church, there developed a variance in point of view. Ayer says regarding this, "The first clash came regarding the date of Easter, as to which marked the differences existed between the churches of Asia

Minor, at that time the most flourishing part of the church, and the churches of the west, especially with the church at Rome, the strongest local church of all. The outcome was the practical isolation of the churches of Asia Minor for many years. This controversy was not settled, and the churches of Asia Minor did not again play a prominent part in the church until the time of Constantine and the Council of Nicaea". 1.

II. THE EASTER FESTIVAL IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

1. The Story of the Resurrection in the New Testament.

Of course it is true that the church was not established until after the first Easter. Although Jesus had given instruction regarding a church, it was not definitely formed into a body during his life. Some would say that the church really began on Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, or the Passover. Yet while it is true that Peter and the other Disciples of Jesus preached at that time, and many responded to the challenge to believe on Jesus, it would seem that the church cannot be dated as beginning on any specific day or occasion. Rather, it was a growth.

But this study of the Easter festival would not be complete without at least one of the Gospel accounts of that first day and its events which meant so much to those who had staked their faith and their lives on faith in Jesus as the Messiah of God. We quote from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24: "On the sabbath they rested in obedience to God's command, but on the first day of the week at the early dawn they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. The boulder they found rolled away from the tomb, but when they went inside they could not find the body of the Lord Jesus. They were puzzling over this, when two men flashed on them in dazzling raiment. They were terrified and bent their faces to the ground, but the men said to them,

'Why do you look among the dead for him who is alive? He is not here. He is risen. Remember how he told you when he was still in Galilee that the Son of man had to be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and rise on the third day.' Then they remembered what he had said, and turning away from the tomb they reported all this to the eleven and all the others.

"(It was Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James who with the rest of the women told this to the apostles). But the story of the women seemed in their opinion as nonsense; they would not believe them. Peter did get up and run to the tomb, but when he looked in he saw nothing except the linen bandages; so he went away home wondering what had happened.

"That very day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were conversing about all these events, and during their conversation and discussion Jesus himself approached and walked beside them, though they were prevented from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What is all this you are debating as you walk?' They stopped, looking downcast, and one of them called Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you a lone stranger in Jerusalem not to know what has been happening there?' 'What is that?' he said to them. They replied, 'All about Jesus of Nazareth! To God and all the people he was a prophet strong

in action and utterance, but the high priests and our rulers delivered him up to be sentenced to death and crucified him. Our own hope was that he would be the redeemer of Israel; but he is dead, and that is three days ago! Though some of the women of our number gave us a surprise; they were at the tomb early in the morning and could not find his body, but they came to tell us that they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our company did go to the tomb and found things exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him.' He said to them, 'O foolish men, with hearts so slow to believe, after all the prophets have declared! Had not the Christ to suffer thus and so enter his glory?' Then he began with Moses and all the prophets and interpreted to them the passages referring to himself throughout the scriptures."

Now they approached the village to which they were going. He pretended to be going further on, but they pressed him saying, 'Stay with us, for it is getting toward the evening and the day has now declined'. So he went in to stay with them. And as he lay at the table with them he took the loaf, blessed it, broke it and handed it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, but he vanished from their sight. And they said one to another, 'Did not our hearts glow within us when he was talking to us on the road, opening up the scriptures for us?' So they got up and re-

turned to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven and their friends all gathered, who told them that the Lord had really risen and had appeared unto Simon. Then they related their own experience on the road and how they had recognized him when he broke the loaf. Just as they were speaking he stood among them (and said to them, 'Peace to you'). They were scared and terrified, imagining it was a ghost they saw; but he said to them, 'Why are you upset? Why do you have doubts in your mind? Look at my hands and feet. It is I! Feel me and see; a ghost has not flesh and bones as you see I have'. (With these words he showed them his hands and feet). Even yet they could not believe it for sheer joy; they were lost in wonder. So he said to them, 'Have you any food here?' And when they handed him a piece of broiled fish, he took and ate it in their presence. Then he said to them, 'When I was still with you, this is what I told you, that whatever is written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled'. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. 'Thus', he said, 'it is written that the Christ has to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and the remission of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. To this you must bear testimony.' 1.

All the Gospel writers record the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection, with some variations. To make

the account in this paper more complete, we are also quoting a part of the story from Matthew. "At the close of the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. But a great earthquake took place; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and went and rolled away the boulder and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his garment white as snow. For fear of him the sentries shook and became like dead men; but the angel addressed the women, saying, 'Have no fear; I know you are looking for the crucified Jesus. He is not here, he is risen, as he told you he would. See, here is the place where he (the Lord) lay. Now be quick and go to his disciples, tell them that he has risen from the dead and that 'he precedes you into Galilee; you shall see him there. That is my message to you.' Then they ran quickly from the tomb in fear and great joy, to announce the news to his disciples. And Jesus himself met them, saying, 'Hail'! So they went up to him and caught hold of his feet and worshiped him; then Jesus said unto them, 'Have no fear! Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee; they shall see me there'.

"While they were on their way, some of the sentries went into the city and reported all that had taken place to the high priests, who, after meeting and conferring with the elders, gave a considerable sum of money to the soldiers and told them to say that 'his disciples came at night and stole him when we were asleep'. 'If this comes to the ears of the

governor', they added, 'we will satisfy him and see that you have no trouble about the matter'. So the soldiers took the money and followed their instructions; and this story has been disseminated among the Jews down to the present day." 1.

Edersheim compared these two Gospel stories in an interesting way, and says, "St. Luke seems to crowd into the Easter Evening what he himself tells us occupied forty days. 2. His is, so to speak, the pre-eminently Jerusalem account of the evidence of the Resurrection; St. Luke seems to have made a most full inquiry as to all the facts of the Resurrection, and his narrative might almost be inscribed: 'Easter Day in Jerusalem'. That of St. Matthew the pre-eminently Galilean account of it. Yet each implies and corroborates the facts of the other. In general we ought to remember, that the Evangelists, and afterwards St. Paul, are not concerned to narrate the whole history of the Resurrection; furnish the evidence for it, and here what is distinctive in each is also characteristic of his special view-point. St. Matthew describes the impression of the full evidence of that Easter morning on friend and foe, and then hurries us from the Jerusalem stained with Christ's blood back to the

1. Matthew 23:1-15. Moffatt's translation.

2. Acts 1: 3 - "After his suffering he had shown them that he was alive by a number of proofs, revealing himself to them for forty days and discussing the affairs of God's Realm". Moffatt's translation.

sweet lake and the blessed Mount where first he knew him. It is, as if he longed to realize the Risen Christ in the scenes where he had learned to know him". 1.

2. Testimony of Josephus.

In his story of the sedition of the Jews against Pontius Pilate, Josephus, the historian introduces the name of Jesus and gives a brief account of the crucifixion, and the events that followed: "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, -- a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles.

"He was (the) Christ: and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principle men among us, had condemned him to the cross (A. D. 33), those who loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them as alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day". 2. 3.

1. Edersheim, Vol. II, Page 622.

2. Works of Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews. Book 18, P. 548.

3. This paragraph from Josephus is generally regarded as being spurious, and inserted by a hand other than the historian.

3. The Testimony of the Apostle Paul.

Paul speaks of himself as one coming upon the scenes at a late date, as one "Born out of due season". But he takes up the argument for the Resurrection of Jesus, which proved a stumbling block to the Jews and seemed foolish to the Greek philosophers. 1. But in his writings to the Church at Corinth, 2. he reached his greatest height in beauty of reasoning on this subject.

But the purpose of this study is not to seek to present the arguments for the resurrection, but rather to trace some of the customs and institutions which have developed about the time when Christians celebrate that date in their calendar. However, these passages from the scripture have been quoted and cited to give some of the atmosphere of the time, and to help us understand the very beginnings of the festival now known as Easter. These passages of scripture and authors are quoted, not taking into account any question of critical or textual criticism.

1. I Corinthians 1: 18 - 25.
2. I Corinthians 15: 12 - 22.

4. The Testimony of Luke in The Acts".

In connection with the Gospel accounts, and some statements of Paul, the Apostle, it would be well to include some statements from The Acts written by Luke also the author of the Gospel bearing his name. This story of the history of the early days following the tragedy of the pass-over during which Jesus was crucified, is introduced in the first statements of Luke's history:

"The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God". 1.

"Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection". (To take the place of Judas). 2.

1. Acts 1: 1 - 3.

2. Acts 1: 21, 22.

"----- Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay: ----- This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" 1.

5. The First Day of the Week, or Lord's Day.

Just what happened following that first Easter day is not clearly told. Much is left in inference and speculation, for the Gospel writers, or those who took up the thread of the story were not interested in writing a history. Indeed, it likely never occurred to them that they were even making history. They were simply seeking to interpret the experiences of their own hearts and lives, and what was written at all was written to help those of their own day to visualize the experience.

It is told that, "They returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went into

the upper chamber, where they were abiding ----- These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren". 1.

Paul urges the Christians to continue the custom of assembly: 2 "On the first day of the week". 3. And the writer of Revelations speaks of this first day of the week as the "Lord's Day". 4.

These foregoing passages, and those from the Gospels, as well as the quotation from Josephus are all given as they appear in their ordinary connection, and without regard for the position which may be taken in a critical study of textual criticism. For, it is not the purpose of this study to make a case for these texts, but to show some of the literature bearing on the first Easter, and its connection with what followed.

1. Acts 1: 12 - 14.
2. Hebrews 10: 25.
3. I Cor. 16: 2.
4. Revelations 1: 10.

6. The Testimony of the Church Fathers and Records.

a. Up to the year 300 evidence is very scant. Eusebius states that the pascha was celebrated with mourning, and that the church synods (exclusive of those of Asia Minor) ordered that the "mystery of the resurrection of the Lord" should be observed only on the Lord's day, and that on that day "the close of the pascha fast should be observed".

b. Tertullian and others refer to rigils extending into the night of Saturday, or until the cock-crowing of Sunday morning. The chief source of information is the Apostles Constitution, which speaks of fasting, beginning on "Monday of the Paschal week and continuing with growing rigor into Saturday night", and adds that on Saturday night the whole congregation met and engaged in prayer, "especially for the Jews", and in reading from the scripture. Sunday was then observed in the meeting together of the rich and poor in a love-feast and the eucharist. 1.

From 300 A. D. on, the Easter festival was observed with the preaching of special sermons on the pascha, such sermons are found in the writings of Ambrose, Augustine, and other writers of the time. The day was looked upon as the most joyous festival of the year. The week beginning with Easter Sunday was observed with special religious festivities

and each day had its sermon. A sermon by Ambrose gives expression to the joyous feelings of Easter. "He called the day the real beginning of the year, the opening of the month, the new revival of the seeds, and the restoration of the year interrupted by the cold winter. On that day God, as it were, relights the sun and gives light to the moon". 1.

The Easter celebration in this period sometimes began on Saturday and was known as "The Paschal Vigil". Augustine called this the "Master of the sacred vigils," and says that "even the heather kept awake on that night". From these records it would seem that the observance of the Easter celebration did not begin before Friday, while in the modern church the order has been somewhat reversed.

The services on this occasion in the early church consisted in the reading from the Law, the Prophets, and the narratives of the Lord's passion, in the administration of baptism and the confirmation of believers. These latter customs are still observed in modern churches at the Easter time.

"The use of lighted candles became universal and is attested as the custom in Rome at least as early as the middle of the third century". 2.

1. New Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. LV. P. 44.

2. Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. IV. P. 44.

The Canons of Hippolytus (Vol. 4, Page 136) says that "On the night of the resurrection no one should sleep and every one should have a light, for on that night the Redeemer made every one free from the darkness of sin and the grave". 1.

Augustine bears witness to the custom of lighting and carrying candles. Eusebius says, "The whole city of Constantinople was illuminated with wax candles and columns of wax". 2.

What was known as "Paschal fire" was also a custom of the early church, and can be traced at least to A. D. 600 and was used in France. New fire was struck from a stone and the candles and tapers were lighted from it. It is likely that this custom of striking new fire was derived from that of the Romans at the altar of Vesta, at the opening of the new year March 1.

1. Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. IV. P. 45.

2. Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. IV. P. 45

7. Other Customs of Easter Time During Early Centuries.

a. The custom of New fire was also observed in Gaul, but how widely it is not known. It was customary to place five pieces of incense in the great paschal candle to symbolize the five wounds of Christ.

b. The Codes of Theodosius and Justinian.

These recognized the joyous character of the Easter day and encouraged the emancipation of slaves and the liberation of minor criminals, and ordering the omission of spectacular entertainments during the week. It was also a time for the presentation of gifts and the distribution of alms.

c. The Acts of the Councils.

"These Councils (Orleans 538, Macon, 581) down through the middle ages to the Fourth Lateran (1215) and later councils forbade the Jews to tread the streets or to show themselves out of doors from Monday until after Easter, lest the joy of the Christians should be interrupted." 1.

1. Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. IV. Page 45.

8. Palm Sunday.

a. In Jerusalem.

The basis of the celebration of the Sunday before Easter, now known as "Palm Sunday" is the Gospel story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before the Passover when the crowd went to meet him, and carried branches of palm trees and waved them in welcome. 1.

The oldest description of the liturgical celebration of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem is in the fourth century, and is given in the "*Itinerarium Egeriae*" (CSEL LXXIX, 88 Sol. Eng. Trans. Palestine Pilgrim Text Society, P. 51)" The beautiful festival began at one o'clock in the afternoon in the church upon the Mount of Olives, with the singing of hymns and the antiphones and the reading of lessons.

"The characteristic feature of the celebration was the several processions from one church to the other which took place accompanied by the repeated acclamation of the people, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'. Children held palm branches or olive branches in their hands and accompanied the bishop, who represented the Lord and rode upon an ass". 2.

1. Matthew 21: 1 - 11; Luke 19: 29 - 44; John 12: 12 - 19.

2. P. Drews, Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. V. P. 334

In the fifth century the festival of the palms had spread over the whole of Palestine. In the records of the festival of early days there is no indication that the palms were consecrated, but the testimony does bear out the fact that the day was one of joy, and not of mourning, and the Epistle read on that occasion was Philippians 4: 4 - 9.

b. Palm Sunday --- In the West.

As the day was originally celebrated in the west there is no record of palms or other branches being used. Palm Sunday, or the Sunday preceding Easter Sunday, according to the oldest records, was similar in character to Passion Sunday, and so was a day of mourning. In the fifth century the use of palms was introduced and with the exception of the consecration of the palms, the ceremony was similar to that in Jerusalem.

"In the later Middle Ages the procession developed so as to imitate as faithfully as possible the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. As in the east, the bishop representing Christ rode on an ass or a horse. There developed also the ceremony of consecration. Not only were the palms consecrated, but also the flowers which were carried in the procession". 1.

Following Palm Sunday, the first three days of "Great Week", that is Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, according to the *Peregrinatio Silviæ*, were early distinguished by special services. On Monday, no ceremony is mentioned, but was observed as a day of fasting. On Tuesday, in the vigil the bishop himself reads the Gospel of the day, Matthew 24: 4 f. upon the Mount of Olives, from the cave in which the Lord used to teach his disciples.

On Wednesday the vigil takes place in the church of the Resurrection; the presbyters read the Gospel of the day, Matthew 26: 14 - 16, and the history of the betrayal, while the congregation utters loud cries of resentment.

9. "Holy Week" During the Early Centuries.

Holy Week, a term used to designate the week preceding Easter Sunday, was also called by some "Great Week". The oldest witness as to this term and usage is the pilgrim Egeria, who wrote of her travels in 385 A. D. Chrysostom also mentions the week before Easter in this same term. In the account of Egeria detailed description of the rich liturgical celebrations by which "Great Week" beginning with Palm Sunday was celebrated in Jerusalem.

"In some places the week was observed by fasting, though this custom was not uniform, for while some fasted all week, others observed the fast for a shorter time, -- even

only Friday and Saturday preceding Easter Sunday.

"But this seemed to be a general rule that all amusements were forbidden, all public offices were closed, prisoners were released, slaves were benefited, sometimes by release, and the poor were provided with plentiful gifts". 1.

This spirit of beneficence at Easter time was not confined to one group or community. The sacrificial death of Christ awakened in others the spirit of kindness and helpfulness, especially toward those who were unfortunate and unable to help themselves. Jesus died for those who were lost and were unable to save themselves. There is a striking reproduction of at least a part of the sacrificial spirit of Jesus in these acts of benevolence.

III. THE EASTER FESTIVAL AS NOW OBSERVED BY CHRISTENDOM.

1. By the Roman Catholic Church.

At the present time much of the ancient ceremony is retained in the Latin and Greek churches. "Elaborate and solemn rites are observed on Saturday and until the cock-crowing on Easter morning when the tapers are lighted (extinguished on Good Friday) are lighted with the words, "The Light of Christ". 1.

a. The Lord's Supper on Easter.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper early became one of the chief rites connected with Easter. Those who had become cold and lax in their religious life and their attendance on religious ceremonies felt they must, on Easter, if at no other time, commune. "In the council held in the Lateran in Rome in the year 1215, that which had been a custom became an obligation, and the twenty first canon of this council reads thus: 'Every believer, of either sex, who has come to the years of discretion, must at least once a year confess honestly his sins to his own priest and perform the penance which may be enjoined as far as he is able, and at least on Easter solemnly receive the eucharist, unless

1. Schaff-Herzog Encyclo. Vol. IV. P. 45. Carl Berthean.

his priest out of sufficient grounds has forbidden its reception. Whoever refuses so to do will be excluded from the church, and on death be refused a Christian burial." 1.

b. Lent.

Lent is the season of the year immediately preceding Easter, and is named from the lengthening of the days. It has long been a season of special significance to the church calendar, and both Catholic and Protestant churches observe the season in a variety of ways, some in a very strict way, while others are less formal in their program. The season is described as follows:

"The annual season of fasting in the spring, observed by many churches as a preparation for the great feast of Easter and as a time for special penitence, and in the Western Church since the Middle Ages fixed in duration at forty days, which have been established as the forty week days preceding Easter, the first being Ash Wednesday. The six Sundays occurring in this period are excluded from Lent, for the reason that Sunday is always a feast, and hence are called Sundays in(not of) Lent. In the early church, the duration of Lent either was not fixed or varied in the churches of different places, but from the early part of the fourth century the period of fasting appears to have approximated more or less closely to forty days, the fast being extended over six weeks or seven

weeks, according as Sundays only or Sundays and Saturdays were excepted. In the Eastern church, Lent, called often Great Lent, or the Great Fast to distinguish it from the other periods of fasting to which the name Lent was applied. ----- The forty days are regarded as being kept after the example of Moses, (Ex. 34: 28) and Elijah (I Kings 19: 8). and above all as commemorating the fasting of Christ (Matt. 4: 2)". 1.

c. A Custom of Worship, now Discontinued.

In the celebrations of Easter many customs developed which were calculated to deepen the spiritual life of all who had part, but not all were of this variety. One such is related by Holweck as having originated in Bavaria during the fifteenth century. "It was the custom of the priest to embody in his sermon some funny stories which were calculated to provoke laughter and amusement. For example, a description of how the devil tried to keep the door of hell locked against the descending Christ. (Some have interpreted the scripture (2) as meaning that Jesus preached to hell-imprisoned spirits during the days he was in the grave). Because this custom gave rise to the abuses regarding the use and interpretation of the scriptures, it was forbidden by Clement X, 3, and in the 18th century by Maximilian III, and the bishop of Bavaria". 4

1. Webster's New International Dictionary. P. 1235
2. I Peter 3: 18, 19.
3. Pope of Rome 1670 - 76.
4. Frederick G. Holweck, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. V. P. 227.

d. The Easter Blessing.

It has been a custom of the Catholic church, still practiced in some places, for the parish priest to visit the homes of his parish on the day before Easter, and bless the home, in memory of the passing of the angel in Egypt, and the signing of the doorposts with the blood of the paschal lamb. The papal apartments are also visited that day and blessed by the pontiff himself. 1.

e. Blessing the Food.

In both Oriental and Latin churches it is customary to have the foods which have been prohibited during Lent blessed by the priest before eating them on Easter day, especially meat, eggs, butter, and cheese. "Those who eat before the food is blessed, according to a popular belief, were punished by God, sometimes instantaneously". 2.

f. Easter Fire.

There was an ancient custom, of pagan origin, in vogue over all Europe and connected with the Easter celebration until it was prohibited by the bishops. It was called the "Easter Fire" and was kindled from new fire drawn from

1. Frederick G. Holweck, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. V. P. 227.

2. Frederick G. Holweck, Vol. V. P. 227.

wood by friction. This signified the victory of spring over winter. The edict of the bishops prohibiting the custom did not altogether abolish it. Rather, "The church adopted the observance into its ceremony, striking the new fire from flint, symbolizing the resurrection of the Light of the world from the tomb closed by stone. In some places a figure, symbolizing winter, was thrown into the Easter fire, but to the Christians on the Rhine, Tyrol, and Bohemia, Judas the traitor was meant." 1.

This custom of striking fire at this springtime festival is very similar to that of the Shinto priests of Japan. Except that these priests in Japan visit the homes at New Year and by striking fire over the household, drive out the evil spirits and insure happiness for the coming year. The coming of the new year, and the coming of spring would seem to be similar in spirit, and there may be something of common origin in the customs.

g. Eggs, and Their Symbolism.

Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, which ended with Easter, they were brought to the table on Easter day and colored red to symbolize the Easter joy.

"This custom is found not only in the Latin churches, but

also in the Oriental churches". 1.

Holbeck has this to say further about the connection of eggs in their use on Easter. "The symbolic meaning of a new creation of mankind by Jesus risen from the dead was probably an invention of later times. The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a good many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter. The egg is an emblem of the germinating life of early spring. Easter eggs, the children are told, come from Rome with the bells which on Thursday go to Rome and return on Saturday morning. The sponsors in some countries give Easter eggs to their god-children". 2.

h. Worship During Easter Week.

Palm Sunday has already been mentioned. This is regarded as the beginning of Easter week, and the Catholic Church makes much of this day in its program, it being a day of confirmation and consecration.

There are special services on each day of the week following Palm Sunday, culminating with the eucharist on Thursday night, corresponding to the last supper of Jesus with

1. Holweck, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. V. (. 227.

2. Holweck, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. V. P. 227.

his disciples. Baptism is also administered on Thursday, as a preparation for what is to follow, and an evidence of loyalty to Christ. No doubt there is in the memory the denial by Simon Peter, even when he declared his loyalty.

During this week there are special services to which the public is now being invited. At least this is true in some American cities. This indicates a more liberal attitude on the part of the Catholic leaders. But I am unable to ascertain if this is a general practice or limited to local communities, and left to the discretion of the leaders.

Thursday has significance, not only because of the last supper, but also because of what followed, -- the Master giving an object lesson in humility by washing the feet of the disciples. (John 13: 5 - 10). The custom of foot-washing was a regular part of the Thursday program, and the day was called "Maundy Thursday" from the custom of washing the feet. Among Catholics this custom is not now followed, though there are a few Protestant groups which practice it in connection with their "Love Feast".

It would seem that the post-apostolic age understood the custom to be mandatory. Augustine testified that it was followed on "Maundy Thursday" by the church of his day. St. Bernard recommended foot-washing as a "daily sacrament for the remission of sins".

"In the Greek church it was regarded as a 'mystery'. Yet it nowhere became a general, public, solemn, ecclesiastical

act. It was still performed, however, in certain places as by the pope, the Emperor of Austria and Russia, in their time, the Kings of Spain, Portugal, and Bavaria, and a member of the bishops and monastic superiors, the subjects being twelve poor old men invited for that purpose, or twelve priests". 1.

1. "GOOD FRIDAY".

According to the records, the Friday before the Jewish Passover on which Jesus was crucified, has been kept by all branches of the church as a special day, and has been characterized by various forms of worship.

"In the Catholic Church one of the prominent ceremonies is called 'Tenebrae', meaning 'Darkness'. During this service the Lamentations of Jeremiah are sung as lessons and the gradual extinction of fifteen candles in the 'Tenebrae hearse', or triangular candle stick, as the service proceeds. At the end of the Benedictus at Lauds only the topmost candle, considered to be typical of Jesus Christ, remains alight, and this is then taken down and hidden behind the altar, while the final miserere and collects are said. At the conclusion, after a loud noise emblematic of the convulsion of nature at the death of Christ, the candle is restored to

1. Paul Tschackert, Schaff-Herzog Enc. Vol. IV. P. 329.

its place, and the congregation dispersed. On account of the gradual darkening, the service has been known as 'Tenebrae' (darkness). Tenebrae is sung on the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the antiphones and proper lessons varying each day.

"Finally, the Good Friday service ends with the so-called 'Mass of the Pre-sanctified, which is of course no real sacrifice, but strictly speaking, only a communion service." 1.

"Good Friday" was originally a term used only by the Church of England. The Catholic Church used the term "Holy Friday". But now the term "Good Friday" is commonly used by both Catholic and Protestant Churches and people to designate the day before Easter on which Jesus was crucified. The name "Black Friday" has at times been used in some communities to indicate the day, but there seems no record in writing of such a term as referring to Friday before Easter. It was likely only a colloquial term and never widely enough known or used to get into print.

Good Friday continued.

The Syriac Didascolia and the Apostolic Constitution demand absolute fasting on Good Friday and Saturday before Easter. About the middle of the third century it was customary

1. Hubert Thurston, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. VII. P. 437.

also in Alexandria to abstain entirely from food on both days, although not unconditionally. "The custom of the occident in keeping the day is closely related to that of the East: the day is the deepest mourning and of strictest fasting, and there is a tendency to limit the church services as much as possible". 1.

It is this influence of fasting on Good Friday that has been extended to every Friday, and for Catholic people it is prohibited that they eat certain kinds of meat. It is looked upon as a certain kind of self-denial, but the real value as a fast or self-denial can be questioned so long as fish is allowed as a substitute.

Regarding Good Friday in the Catholic Church, Drews comments, "In the Roman Catholic Church Good Friday is not a holiday, and therefore the performance of daily work is allowed. The liturgical name for Good Friday, especially among the Latins, is 'day of preparation'. Among the Jews that was the name for every Friday, in preparation for the Sabbath." 2.

1. P. Drews, Schaff-Herzog Enc. Vol. V. P. 335.

2. Ibb.

j. Jerusalem Today.

The following quotation from Fosdick will give some idea of the conditions and practices in Jerusalem at the present time. Dr. Fosdick says, "The more often I visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher the more grateful

I was that we are not compelled to think of the Master's Cross and tomb as being there. Let the visitor, some high day in Lent, go himself and see! Five services are on at once --- the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Armenian, the Jacobite Syrian, and the Coptic. These five possess monopoly of the church and no others are allowed to hold worship there. So jealous are they of their rights in this carefully districted sanctuary, where none may overstep his privileges by a single inch, that within the memory of my friends in Jerusalem a riot broke out and two men were killed because a Greek had swept one more step of an outer stairway than it was his right to sweep. Even under the British rule, while there have been no deaths, there has been bloodshed, and Moslem soldiers still keep guard over the competing Christians.

"Disturbances are frequent. On Good Friday night, while we were in the city, an Armenian Christian who brought a Jewess in his party to the church was set upon by Moslems and Christians alike and thoroughly beaten. Here is the very core and center of all the rampant prejudices and hatreds

rivalries that rend Jerusalem asunder. -----

"Such is the atmosphere of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher today and public worship is so unhappy a demonstration of it. In gorgeous, ecclesiastical vestments the five sets of churchmen parade around the sanctuary, chanting, genuflecting, ringing bells." 1.

k. The Sacred Fire in Jerusalem --- TODAY.

Since "Sacred Fire" has been mentioned as having been used in the Easter worship of other days, it should be included here that such a practice is still a part of the program in Jerusalem at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Fosdick describes this scene as follows:

"On Saturday before the Greek Easter, at the set hour, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is given over to the Greeks, Armenians, and Copts. The premises are jammed with an eager, excited throng. Windows, arcades, vaults, and domes --- wherever human beings possibly can cling --- are occupied. For today the holy fire comes down from heaven --- a glorious annual miracle --- and a blessing awaits the fortunate folks whose tapers are lighted and whose household fires are set ablaze with the sacred flame. --- Those nearest the apertures already are holding their places

1. Harry E. Fosdick, A Pilgrimage to Palestine. P. 242, 3.

with fierce earnestness, with pugilistic violence when need-
ful, for will not those be specially blessed whose tapers first
are lighted by the fire, when it is finally kindled and has not
passed through intervening human mediums?" 1.

Continuing the mad throng as a football band of
rooters celebrating a victory, as they crowd to be close
to the Holy Sepulcher. "As for the religious spirit of it,
that may be judged by the song the crowd sings as it comes in:

O Jew! O Jew! Yours is the feast of the devil
but ours is the feast of the Lord.

Individuals lose control of themselves and fight
for better places only to be mauled by their neighbors or
thrown out by the police. Let a man have what opinion he
may as to the quality of religion represented here, it is
surely one of the best mob scenes he ever witnessed. ---
And this is Christianity in the land of Christ!" 2.

2. By The Protestant Churches.

a. Changes Introduced by the Reformation.

The Lutheran Reformation brought about great change
in the celebration of the entire Easter week. Most of the
ceremonies then extant in the church were condemned by the
leaders of the Reformation, perhaps because they were

1. Fosdick, A Pilgrimage to Palestine. P. 261 f.

2. Fosdick, A Pilgrimage to Palestine. P. 261 f.

practiced by the Catholic Church rather than because they were wrong. Reformers frequently go to extremes in this regard. Yet in the preaching of Luther in the years 1521 and 1522 it is revealed that there were special services provided for "Holy Thursday" and "Good Friday".

The Wittenberg Church in 1533 ordered double preaching for the days Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday preceding Easter. It is also to be noted that during the 16th and 17th centuries "Holy Thursday" and "Good Friday" were treated as being entirely of equal value and importance. But during the early part of the Reformation there was no uniform custom of observing these days.

b. Foot-Washing.

Many of the Reformers, particularly Luther, opposed "that hypocritical foot-washing, in which one stoops to wash the feet of his inferior, but expects still more humility in return". 1.

In the Lutheran Church, during the period of orthodoxy, foot-washing was considered as "an abominable papal corruption". In the year 1718 the "Upper Consistory at Dresden condemned twelve Lutheran citizens to public penance for having permitted Duke Maurice William (a Roman Catholic) to wash their feet". 2.

1. P. Drews, Schaff-Herzog Enc. Vol. V. P. 336.

2. Paul Tschackert, Schaff-Herzog Enc. Vol. IV. P. 339.

Foot-Washing continued.

The Moravians revived foot-washing and the love-feasts, without making the ceremony obligatory and without strict observance on Maundy Thursday. It was performed not only by the leaders toward their followers, but also the latter among themselves, during the singing of a hymn explanatory of the symbol. The practice was finally abolished by the Moravian Synod in 1818.

Many minor Baptist bodies observe the custom of foot-washing until the present time. Perhaps the best known of these bodies which still retains this custom is that known as Dunkers, or Dunkards, an off-shoot of the Baptist communion.

"Once or twice a year they meet, always in the evening, for a love-feast. On these occasions there is first preaching on self-examination, followed by the service of foot-washing, the men and the women occupying separate parts of the building; next, they eat together what they call the Lord's Supper, at the close of which they greet each other with the kiss of charity; then follows the communion of the loaf and cup, unleavened bread being used." 1.

c. Worship During Easter Week.

It is a generally conceded fact that the Protestant Churches have not observed the days preceding Easter so strictly as has the Catholic Church. This was partly due to the influence of the Reformation in which those who participated in it were inclined to discard everything which had been connected with the Catholic Church. In this extreme position, the Protestant Church certainly lost much of spiritual power and value as well as inspiration in the Easter season.

There has been a decided change in recent years among many Protestant leaders as to the value of Easter, and therefore not allowing any one group of believers, Catholic or otherwise, to have a monopoly on the Easter season. True, there has been no uniform ceremony or observance among all Protestant Churches. In many cases some particular branch of the Church may have a rather uniform service, but this applies only to that group or communion, and not to Protestant Churches as a whole.

"In the Anglican Church", says Drews, "the entire week is distinguished by special services, and Palm Sunday, in many State Churches is the customary day for confirmation." 1.

1. P. Drews, Schaff-Herzog Enc. Vol. V. P. 336.

"In the evangelical of Great Britain and the United States the observances of the week as a whole are disregarded. There is a very decided tendency, however, to make the "Good Friday" a day of special services. The usages of the churches are also affecting social and business life, -- shown in the former by refraining from participation in amusements, in closer attendance upon public worship, and in acts of self-denial, and in the latter by such customs as closing the exchanges, banks, and even the offices of corporations". 1.

A public school teacher was heard to remark recently that the closing of the schools during the week preceding Easter was an evidence of the influence of the Catholic Church over the School Board. But this seems to be an unfair conclusion, for in the city of Berkeley, and other cities nearby, the public schools do not close for the Easter vacation until on Good Friday, and the holiday extends over the week following Easter, and this is because the date following Easter, as reported in the papers, is better suited for the teacher's institute which is promoted during the vacation.

d. Spirit of Unity Fostered in Easter Services.

As an evidence of the growing spirit of unity and co-operation in Protestant groups, the following announcement is

quoted from a church bulletin which invites the members of the churches of the community to share in a union meeting on Good Friday. "A Good Friday Service will be held on Friday from 12 to 3 P. M. at the Methodist Church. The seven statements from the cross will be used as subjects for meditation. The ministers of the different churches will speak. This will be a most sacred and solemn service. It is held in memory of the sufferings and death of Jesus". 1. Newspaper announcement attached.

Another example of unity and cooperation is seen in what has been called "Noon Day Meetings" during the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. These meetings are usually in some central location, perhaps in a down-town theater, and the time is so arranged that the people whose business makes it impossible for them to go to some church on these days for worship, may attend these meetings during the noon hour. These meetings are promoted by the Protestant groups of the local city organization, and the atmosphere, music, and message are all in keeping with the Easter thought.

e. Easter a Time of Evangelism.

Many Protestant Churches in recent years have been stressing the winning of converts during this season. Some use the "revival" meeting, while others have adopted methods now widely used and known as "Personal Evangelism".

1. From local church bulletin, Lodi, Calif. March 24, 1929.

By this is meant the laymen and lay-women of the church using such methods, going personally to men and women and seeking to win their loyalty to Jesus. Such personal work usually culminates on Easter Sunday with a "Question Service" when these Christians come with the new candidates and introduce them to the pastor and to the church. It has proved a new bond of unity for both the new members and for those who have sought and found them.

In some churches there is held during this Easter week a series of meetings in which the spiritual life of the membership is nourished and consecrated. One method used has been to provide each one with a small book in which are printed the events of the life of Jesus during his last week. These stories are arranged from the Gospels, and planned so that the teaching and incidents of each day during that last week may be read on the corresponding day. This has proved to be a source of inspiration and challenge.

f. Easter Sunday.

There is no ceremony for this day, which has been universally adopted by the Protestant Churches. Each church, or each communion is independent in this regard. To many, it is a time for the administration of baptism and consecration, as Palm Sunday is for the Catholic and Anglican Churches.

One of the beautiful features now becoming prominent in many communities, where weather conditions make it possible, is the "Sunrise Service" where great throngs assemble in the open early in the morning for worship. This is becoming a popular event, and especially in California where the weather at this season is so favorable. Outside California one place where the custom is followed, and is growing in public favor is in "The Garden of the Gods", near Denver, Colorado.

g. "Easter Sunrise Pilgrimage".

From the statement of Leonard-Stuart, it would seem that this Sunrise idea did not take form until 1908, and then not on Easter. The one which he describes took place at Riverside, California, which is seventy miles from Los Angeles. A cross had been set up on top of Mount Rubidoux, near the city of Riverside, and named for Father Juniper Serra, the founder of the California Missions. Regarding it Stuart says, "It is an unusual ceremonial, inaugurated by the late Joseph Riis on Washington's birthday, 1909. This annual service developed until, in Easter of 1914, over 4,500 people, including many distinguished Americans, attended to hear the reading of a poem by Mr. Henry Van Dyke, 'God of the Open Air', 1, and to watch a pageant recounting some chapters in the history of the valley". 2.

1. God of the Open Air. Van Dyke. Written in 1904.

"Thou who hast made thy dwelling fair
 With flowers below, above with starry lights
 And set thine altars everywhere, --
 On mountain heights,
 In woodlands dim with many a dream,
 In valleys bright with springs,
 And on the curving capes of every stream:
 Thou who hast taken to thyself the wings
 Of morning, to abide
 Upon the secret places of the sea,
 And on far islands, where the tide
 Visits the beauty of untrodden shores,
 Waiting for worshipers to come to thee
 In thy great out-of-doors!
 To thee I turn, to thee I make my prayer,
 God of the open air".

2. Chas. Leonard-Stuart, The Americana, Vol. IX. Page 509.

Perhaps the most conspicuous "Sunrise" meeting on Easter morning is in the "Hollywood Bowl", a natural amphitheater situated in suburban hills of Los Angeles, California. This "Bowl" has been improved and equipped with seats, which accomodate 20,000 people. On Easter Sunday morning at sunrise a religious program of great inspirational value is held in this out-of-doors theater. This is only of recent years, for the "Bowl" was only recently developed. But the response has been so great that it is estimated fully 50,000 people attend this early morning worship. It is rather amazing to see so many people assemble at such an early hour, and to note their deep interest in this expression of religious faith. Even though all could not be near enough to hear either the music or the speakers distinctly, there was a marvelously reverent attitude in that mighty throng. I speak from observation, for I was present. The seating capacity was crowded, then the remainder of the multitude spread itself over the hillside overlooking the "Bowl". Many were reported to have arrived as early as midnight to insure a place in the bowl, and the seats were all filled long before dawn.

In addition to this great throng in the "Bowl", there is another similar meeting of perhaps equal size in the Coliseum, located in Exposition Park, Los Angeles. This has a seating capacity of perhaos 75,000, and this is also usually filled to capacity. A program that is entirely re-

ligious and which exalts the Resurrection of Jesus is carried on here. These two great meetings at such an hour bear eloquent testimony to the very real interest of people in religion and the assurance of immortality.

So, if the "Sunrise Pilgrimage" founded by Joseph Riis, as described by Stuart, was more of a historical pageant, it is certainly not that now, but is entirely religious --- an Easter worship service.

IV. CUSTOMS WHICH CLING TO EASTER, BUT WITHOUT RELIGIOUS MEANING.

While Easter is now looked upon as primarily religious in its meaning and message, the time was when it was certainly non-Christian, if not non-religious. We have sought to relate some of these customs of the past to the festival as it now is known, but there are still some developments which should be included in this statement, developments or customs which cling to Easter, but without any religious meaning. Holweck mentions some among the Greeks and Russians.

1. "The Greeks and Russians after their long and severe Lent, a time of fasting, make Easter a day of popular sports. At Constantinople the cemetery of Pera is the noisy rendezvous of the Greeks: there are music, dances, and all the pleasures of an Oriental popular resort; the same customs prevail in the cities of Russia. In Russia any one can enter the belfries on Easter and ring the bells, a privilege of which many persons avail themselves". 1.

The above quotation was written in 1909 before the changes in Russia took place, and while it reports conditions as they existed at that time, we cannot be sure that

1. Fred G. Holweck, Catholic Encyclo. Vol. V. P. 228.

they are not the same today.

2. Easter Rabbits.

The Easter rabbit is an old tradition and still survives in the United States and in other countries. The tradition was that the rabbit laid the eggs in the nest, and for this reason the nest had to be in the garden or on the lawn. The rabbit was the pagan symbol of fertility, and this may explain its connection with the spring-time festival and Easter.

The writer recalls childhood memories of the Easter rabbit tradition when we were told to make a nest for the rabbit, using my cap for that purpose. What delight to go later to find the cap well filled with eggs colored with many beautiful designs and pictures. This custom seems to have been somewhat changed, but the idea of the eggs and the rabbits is still with us even though confectionary stores have taken possession of them and converted them to very tasty chocolate! Eggs are still colored, and in some localities there may remain the idea of secrecy, and the making the nest for the rabbit in the garden, but more usually the children who share in the egg and rabbit game help to do the coloring and understand how it is done.

Another childhood memory regarding eggs at the Easter time was that of hiding the eggs before Easter, and

"finding" a nest of Easter morning. The one who could bring in the largest basket full of eggs was declared the winner. It was considered a great prank if one member of the family could find the hiding place of another and take the eggs for his own. It was not considered an act of stealing, but cleverness in detective work, for on Easter morning the eggs were all put into the household egg-basket. This was true in my Virginia home community, and may have been only a local custom.

Another custom in vogue during my childhood, and also seems to have been only local in its interest, was that of an "egg-eating contest" on Easter morning. Eggs were cooked in every variety according to the taste of the household. This egg-eating contest was usually confined to the youth and young men whose appetite seemed never to be entirely satisfied. The one who succeeded in savouring the largest number of eggs was declared the winner, and if memory is not truant, four dozen eggs at one sitting was the accomplished goal of the local champion!

2. Egg Picking, and Egg Rolling.

There is a game which the children delight to play with their colored Easter eggs known as "Egg Picking". This consists in each one selecting an egg which he thinks has a strong shell. Then they bring their eggs together, and the winner is the shell which resists the force of the

other and stays in tact.

"Egg Rolling" is another game, usually enjoyed on Easter Monday, of the day following Easter. This game is played on the lawns, and varies according to the local custom. It has been a custom for some years for the children of Washington to be guests at the White House on Easter Monday and engage in egg-rolling on the White House lawn.

3. Easter Monday.

Easter Monday in some communities is considered a holiday, even as much or more than Friday before Easter. This is another childhood memory, that there was no school on Easter Monday and it was a birthright privilege of the boys to go fishing on that day.

In other communities the young people look upon Easter Monday as one of the times for their annual dance. That is, Easter Monday was one of the dates on which there was always a dance for their crowd. Not because there was any significance in the dance or any connection with this special season, except that it was a holiday.

4. Customs in Europe --- Easter Games.

a. France.

It has long been a custom in France to play ball during the week following Easter. The ball was supposed

to represent the sun, which rose with three leaps on Easter morning. Bishops, priests, and monks, used to play ball following the strict discipline of Lent. This was called "Libertas Decembrica", because formerly in December the masters used to play ball with the servants, maids, and shepherds. The ball game was connected with a dance, in which even the bishops and abbots took part.

b. England.

In England ball games were also a part of the post-Easter program, in which the Municipal Corporation engaged with due parade and dignity. After the game and dance a banquet was given, during which a homily on the feast was read". 1. This custom is no longer practiced.

c. Holweck also relates another strange custom connected with Easter week, though does not tell where it was practiced. The implication is that it is rural England. "On Monday the women had the right to strike their husbands, on Tuesday the men struck their wives, as in December the servants scolded their masters". 2.

1. Fred. G. Holweck, Catholic Enc. Vol. V. P. 227.

2. Fred. G. Holweck, Catholic Enc. Vol. V. P. 227.

He also relates that in northern England the men parade the streets on Easter Sunday and claim the privilege of lifting every woman three times from the ground, receiving in payment a kiss or a silver six-pence. The same was done by the women to the men on the next day.

d. Germany.

It is related that in Neumark, Germany, on Easter day the men servants whip the maid servants with switches; on Monday the maids whip the men. They may secure their release from this punishment with Easter eggs. Holweck suggests that these customs are probably of pre-Christian origin, but does not indicate whether this is mere play, or whether it is real punishment. It is possible that such customs are in vogue in some local community and not generally known, even as the egg-eating stories elsewhere related in this paper.

It is also related that in Germany parents and children try to surprise each other on Easter morning to apoly the health-giving switches. This seems to be engaged in entirely as fun.

There was another custom which dates into the far past, and which was a game among the religious leaders of the time. "At the first Psalms of Matins (the Sunday service preceding the first mass) if a Canon was absent from the choir, some of the Canons and vicars taking

with them the processional cross and the holy water, to go to the house of the absented, sing the 'Macc Dies', sprinkle him with water, if he was still in bed, and lead him to church. In punishment he had to give a breakfast to his conductors". 1.

V. IS THE TEACHING WHICH GATHERS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION ESSENTIAL TO FAITH?

1. The Doctrine of the Resurrection Did Not Originate with Christianity.

The teaching of the resurrection did not have its genesis with Jesus. Traces of the doctrine are found in Zoroastrianism, and especially in later Judaism. The post-exilic prophets gave considerable attention to this doctrine, so that by the time of Jesus there was a party, known as the Pharisees, who believed and taught the resurrection. 2.

2. The Early Ideas of the Resurrection Mainly Physical.

The ideas regarding the future life, as found among ancient people, are hazy and indistinct. Even when the doctrine of the resurrection took form among the

1. Fred. G. Holweck, Catholic Enc. Vol. V. P. 227.

2. Acts 23: 8.

Hebrews, it was a doctrine to the effect that the very body that died was raised up and continued in the same kind of life. They still looked for the restoration of the kingdom of David, and those who had wrought for its coming were to have a part in it when it was restored. There was likely something of this in the mind of those disciples when they asked Jesus, following the resurrection, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the Kingdom of Israel?" 1. But they were to learn that a new day had really dawned. New light had come, and the dawn was breaking, though many had not yet seen it.

a. The Resurrection of Adonis.

The rotation of the seasons of the year greatly distressed ancient people. The mysterious changes in nature, the death of vegetable life, and the revival of this life after the winter of death was thought directly connected with the life of superior beings. This yearly decay and revival of life was gradually personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead.

One of the first such legends known in mythology is that of Tammuz or Adonis. The worship of Adonis was known among the Semitic people of Babylonia and Syria,

and the Greeks borrowed it from them as early as the seventh century before Christ. The true name of the deity was Tammuz, but the Semites referred to him as Adon, a title meaning "lord" which was used by the worshippers. The Greeks misunderstood the title for a proper name and so the deity has been known as Adonis.

This deity was represented as a youth, and was killed while hunting. His death and his return to life were the occasion of festivals among many people of the ancient past. The time was usually, though not always, in the spring of the year. The festival celebrating his death was accompanied with wailing, and images dressed to represent the corpse were carried and thrown into the sea, or into a spring. In some places his revival or resurrection was celebrated the following day. 1.

b. The Tree-Spirit.

In the *Golden Bough*, Frazer tells of a legend in Saxony how the representative of the tree-spirit, after being killed, was brought to life by a doctor. In primitive society the idea of the resurrection was chiefly connected with the spirit in relation to nature, e. g., the tree-god. The idea was prevalent during the hunting

1. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part IV. P. 183.

or pastoral stage of society, when the slain god was an animal. This belief survived the changes and was transmitted into the agricultural stage, when the god was the corn, or a human being representing the corn. This doubtless was the basis for the ceremony known as "Carrying Our Death".

This ceremony has historic references back as far as the sixteenth century. It is supposed by many to have originated among the Alore people, and is celebrated among different people in a variety of ways. But the idea of mimicry and play are always present. An effigy of death is carried out of the village and is thrown into a stream or into a spring. As the image is carried along the group sing:

"We carry Death out of the village,
We bring Summer into the village". 1.

c. Resurrection of Attis.

Attis was represented as a fair youth who was killed by a boar. As a result his followers will not eat pork. There was great sorrow over his death. "But when night had fallen, the sorrow of his worshipers was turned to joy. For suddenly a light shone in the darkness: the tomb was opened: the god had risen from the dead; and

as the priest with balm, he softly whispered in their ears the glad tidings of salvation. The resurrection of the god was hailed by his disciples as a promise that they too would issue triumphant from the corruption of the grave. On the morrow, the twenty-fifth of March, which was reckoned as the vernal equinox, the divine resurrection was celebrated with a wild outburst of joy". 1.

d. Resurrection of Osiris.

Mythology contains the story of the Egyptian deity Osiris, who was cruelly slain as he was lured into a coffer and it was sealed. It was then placed on the waters of the Nile and floated away. The sorrowing wife, Isis, searched until she found the body of her dead husband, and entreated the help of the sun-god Ra. He sent help, and they swathed the body in linen bandages and followed other funeral rites of the Egyptians over the bodies of the dead. Then Isis fanned the dead body with her wings, and Osiris revived and was thenceforth the ruler of the dead and known as the "Lord of the Underworld".

"In the resurrection of Osiris the Egyptians saw the pledge of a life everlasting for themselves beyond the grave. They believed that every man would live eternally in the other world, if only his surviving friends

did for his body what the gods had done for the body of Osiris. Hence the ceremonies observed by the Egyptians over the dead". 1.

e. Teaching of Zoroastrianism.

The teaching of this ancient religion is most interesting as regards the future. When the appointed time comes, "All righteous and wicked, will rise in the places where they die, the bones being demanded back from the earth, the blood from the water, the hair from the plants, and the life from the fire, to which they have respectively been delivered, so that the body is reconstituted of its original materials". There follows a great assembly and the righteous are rewarded, while the wicked are punished for a period, after which an ideal state is created and life much as it was in this world. 2..

f. Parsiism and the Resurrection.

Parsiism is considered as the transmitter of the teaching of Zoroastrianism, which has been considered by many scholars as the perfect type of religious dualism. Man is represented as a compound of physical and psychological parts. His nature is double -- material and spiritual; body and soul. His spiritual parts are immortal, and were created before his material parts.

1. Frazer, Golden Bough, Part IV, Page 274 f.
2. Moore, History of Religions. P. 402 f.

The Parsis believe in a life to come and the resurrection will take place at the end of the present cycle. All wicked souls will be brought out of hell and be purified through the "supreme ordeal". "All souls will be furnished with new bodies and will commence a life of ineffable bliss". 1.

g. Mithraism.

Mithraism is in reality the continuing of the Persian god of light. Mithra as the kindly light of heaven, represented, as the reviving sun, the beneficent creative power, and as the "spirit of the Middle Sphere" he became also a mediatorial god. Mithraism taught that when the evil has destroyed the world, the dead will be raised again and, drinking the blood of the divine bull, will receive immortal life, while fire will devour the wicked." 2.

h. The Greeks and the Resurrection.

To the Greeks the Resurrection was not new. All Greeks had local heroes who lived after death; ghosts too, returned to earth to injure or benefit men; and

1. D. Menant. Enc. Rel. and Ethics. Vol. IX. P. 647.

2. Hopkins, The Hist. of Religion, P. 507.

vegetable-resurrection was celebrated as a divine return to life of a spirit-power.

"To these ideas of revival the Orphics added that of the human soul destined to suffer and be rewarded hereafter which infused into Greek religion the belief of the torture of hell for every evil deed, as every pure soul might be blessed in the next life." 1.

1. "Death and Resurrection of Kostrubonko" ---

A Russian Ceremony.

"The Russian funeral ceremonies like those of 'Burying the Carnival' and 'Carrying out Death' are celebrated under the names, not of Death or Carnival, but of certain mythic figures, Kostrubonko, Kostroma, Kupalo, Lolo, and Youto. These Russian ceremonies are observed both in spring and mid-summer. Thus in Little Russia it used to be the custom at Easter tide to celebrate the funeral of a being called Kostrubonko, the deity of spring. A circle was formed of singers who moved slowly around a girl who lay on the ground as if dead, and as they went they sang, --

'Dead, dead is our Kolrubonko
Dead, dead is our dear one'

"Until the girl suddenly sprang up. On which the chorus joyfully exclaimed, --

'Come to life, come to life has our Kotrubonko,
Come to life, come to life has our dear one'. 1.

3. Resurrection Defined.

The dictionary defines the resurrection as,
"State of being risen from the dead; future state. A
rising again; resumption of vigor; restoration, revival".
Yet this gives the idea of the old body being restored to
life and being the medium through which the spirit and
personality express themselves. With this we cannot agree.
Clarke speaks of the resurrection this way, "If we define
the resurrection of Jesus according to the data of the
Gospels give us, we shall not call it a return to the
bodily life in the old conditions, but rather a rising from
the death into glorious, spiritual life, with power to man-
ifest himself at will to men in this world." 2.

Following the tragedy of Calvary, those disciples
who had been with Jesus and on whom he was depending to
teach others of the Kingdom of love, were disheartened
and were ready to quit. In fact they had quit and were
returning to their old pursuits. Disappointment filled
their hearts. "But we had hoped that it was he who should
redeem Israel". 3. Yet after their leader had been put to

1. Frazer, From the Dying God. P. 261.

2. Mr. Newton Clarke, An Outline of Christian Theology. P. 273

3. Luke 24: 21.

death as a common criminal and with criminals, yet their failing faith was revived and they began to teach with great boldness and vigor, even in spite of great persecution. And the basis of this faith was that Jesus was raised from the dead, and had shown himself to man, not once, but many times, and to many people --- Paul states that more than five hundred saw him at one time. 1. So we are forced to ask ourselves, just what do we mean by the resurrection, and is it vital to faith in Christ as Savior?

4. What of Bodily Resurrection?

It is evident that in the teaching of the Disciples and Apostles, the resurrection forms a very vital part of their faith, and is the substance of their doctrine. Paul exclaims, "Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised: and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: ----- and if Christ

hath not been raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins." 1.

According to the Gospel records, Jesus not only appeared to his disciples and friends, but pointed to his scars in his hands and feet as evidence that he had the same body. He also asked for food, which he ate in their presence. 2. If we accept the resurrection of Jesus, must we not also accept the resurrection of the body --- a physical resurrection, as the definition would indicate?

My reply is no. When thinking of the resurrection, we are primarily thinking not of this life, but a future life; not physical, but spiritual. Paul sums up the matter in, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither corruption inherit incorruption". 3.

This body in which we live and through which we express ourselves is of this world and must stay in it. When life passes from the body it returns to the dust, its source. That which dies is not immortal. That which is immortal cannot die. The spirit which has animated the body during the period of activity cannot die,

1. I Cor. 15: 12 - 17.

2. Luke 24: 36 - 43.

3. I Cor. 15: 50.

neither does it go into a grave. The physical body bears ever the marks of this world: pain, scars, age, death. The spirit bears the brand of its Creator: life, immortality, eternity.

What then of the body of Jesus, not found in the tomb, but when later seen bearing the marks of crucifixion? Frankly, all this has never been entirely explained. But the great miracle of God is life. After life is created, it is no more miraculous to continue it. It would be stranger still to think of the spirit being destroyed or allowed to die as a physical thing. Regarding the body of Jesus during those days following the first Easter morning, I would say, and it is only my own thought, that those frightened disciples were sadly in need of encouragement. To appear to them only in spirit would not cause faith but fright, as it did. 1.

For these disciples it was necessary that they should be confirmed in their faith, and convinced beyond any question that Jesus was alive. To raise and use the body of Jesus during those days of encouragement and confirmation proves no barrier to my faith. The great miracle is life. Once that is believed and realized, the other is not difficult. Yet there are some who would say that the resurrection of

Jesus cannot be proved beyond doubt. This story of his appearance and the scars in his hands and feet cannot be authenticated. Very well, my position is that the resurrection has not to do with the body, but the spirit. To admit that the body of Jesus was really not raised, does not impair the vital truth of the Easter lesson.

To me, Easter did not simply happen. At the spring time of year all nature is eloquent in testimony of life after death. Nature is God's work of life, and one way of expressing his continued power of creation. "If he gives to the rose the sweet assurance of another springtime, will he refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come?"

Norwood quotes John 19: 41, "Now in the place where they crucified him there was a garden", and then comments, "And the garden, if they had understood its message, made the resurrection inevitable". 1. The garden is physical, to be sure, but the life which grows there is not. One flower ripens and drops its seed, then dies. That plant mingles with the soil, but that life in the seed finds expression in another body when the winter is past. It may resemble the old body, but it is suited to the needs of the plant for that new year. So these bodies serve their time, then return to the

dust, but the spirit continues, and He who created it first and gave this body for this world will give a new body, a spiritual body, suited to the new life when the time of transition comes. That sums up my conception of the resurrection of the body.

5. Faith in Life is Essential.

In this discussion we have sought to emphasize the truth that life is the vital element and that other things are secondary. To use the word "Resurrection" in connection with life may give the wrong impression, for as already pointed out, resurrection means or implies being revived, or restored and continued as before. But faith in the continuation of life --- this is important. This faith in life immortal is a vital part of the teaching of the religion of Jesus.

Regarding this Clarke says, "The practical and moral value of the resurrection as an element in belief is secured by any view that holds to the presence in the other life all that is essential to a human being. The doctrine of the resurrection has rendered service of great value in Christian thought, by adding definiteness and vigor to the hope of immortality". 1.

1. Wm. Newton Clarke, An Outline of Christian Theology. P. 356.

Regarding the continuation of life after this, Brown says, "This new conception of the life after death is accompanied by a corresponding modification of the idea of the resurrection. Instead of involving the restoration of the individual to the conditions of this present physical existence, it is thought of as a means by which he is furnished with an organism adequate to the needs of a higher spiritual world. A striking example of such reconstruction is Paul's doctrine in I Corinthians XV." 1. This means a new body, suited to a new condition when this earthly body has returned to its former elements.

It is an interesting observation that men of all nations and all conditions have believed in continued life, in some form or other. In all human history there is present this longing to continue life, once it has begun. It is the logical conclusion of man's thought regarding himself. "Faith in immortality is a fact, the most vivid, the most sublime fact of human experience. Even those who do not possess it must acknowledge it, for whatever they call it, however they explain it, they find it in others. This faith in the life hereafter has its origin in the life here. However we came, we live. Whoever designed us, we are. The great

1. Wm. Adams Brown, Christian Theology in Outline, P. 253.

The great mystery, the supreme miracle, is the mystery of man, the miracle of personality. Put that in your test tube if you can". 1.

Poling quotes Victor Hugo as saying, "I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave, I can say, as so many others have said, 'I have finished my day's work', but I cannot, no, I cannot say, 'I have finished my life'. Another day's work will begin in the morning. My tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare; it closes with the twilight, to open with the dawn." 2.

"Life is real, Life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul". 3.

During the two weeks preceding Easter, (March 24 - April '8) 1928, the International Missionary Council held its meeting in Jerusalem, and representatives from fifty nations were present. The closing sessions of that Council were on Easter Sunday, April 8, and the day was one of worship and inspiration. Dr. Robert E. Speer, one of the world's outstanding Christian leaders,

1. Daniel A. Poling, Editorial Christian Herald, March 30, 1929
2. Victor Hugo, in Poling's Editorial Herald, March 30, 1929.
3. The Psalm of Life, Henry W. Longfellow.

was the speaker on that occasion, and his theme was "The Resurrection." In that sermon he asked the question, "Is the Resurrection the habitual, controlling principle of our Christian life?" He answers the question as follows:

a. "Not only is the Resurrection the principle of the Christian life, but in the New Testament it was the foundation of the Christian faith. It was the joyful, victorious, inspiring note of the apostolic message. If that Gospel is our gospel, and other gospel there cannot be, then this glad message of Easter morning must be the supreme word, 'Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!'. "

b. "The risen Christ is the proof and donor of all power, and the Resurrection is the pledge and measure of it. There is no possibility of disconnecting the power of the Holy Spirit from the Resurrection. The power of the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by His Resurrection. And it was the power of the Risen Christ which came forth in the Holy Spirit, given without measure to men. --- The Resurrection showed what God could do all alone.

c. "Lastly, therefore, let us remind ourselves of the Resurrection as the assurance of the Christian hope. It was the rebirth of a dead hope to the early

church. Christian hope was slain in the crucifixion; had died and was buried with the Lord. One feels the reality and the pathos of it in the story of the two disciples in their walk to Emmaus: 'We had hoped it was He who should redeem Israel.' But with the Resurrection rose again the faith and hope of Christians. They, too, were as dead men come to life again. Peter says it all in his jubilant memories, 'Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'" 1.

I would close this study with a quotation from a poem entitled,

"There Is No Unbelief."

There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.

Whoever says when clouds are in the sky,
'Be patient, heart; light breaketh by and by,'
Trusts the Most High.

Whoever sees 'neath Winter's field of snow
The silver harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.

Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows God will keep.

The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,
And dares to live when life has woes,
God's comfort knows.

There is no unbelief;
And day by day unconsciously
The heart lives by the faith the lips deny,
God knoweth why. 2.

Footnotes for page 81. End of

The Easter festival its historic background and

1. Robt. E. Speer, Jerusalem Meeting, I. M. C.
Vol. VIII. P. 135 ff.

2. Elizabeth York Case, Quotable Poems, P. 97.

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